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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/842,542	04/26/2001	Masayuki Nishiguchi		7853

7590 02/17/2006

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EXAMINER
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MEI, XU

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2644

DATE MAILED: 02/17/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

## Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/842,542

Applicant(s)

NISHIGUCHI ET AL.

Examiner

Xu Mei

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-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

### Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

### Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 29 November 2005.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

### Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 4-17 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1 and 4-17 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

### Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on \_\_\_\_\_ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

### Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
- ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
  - ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
  - ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

### Attachment(s)

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)  | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)                                   | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____  |

**DETAILED ACTION**

1. This communication is responsive to the applicant's amendment dated 11/29/2005.

2. The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. A nonstatutory obviousness-type double patenting rejection is appropriate where the conflicting claims are not identical, but at least one examined application claim is not patentably distinct from the reference claim(s) because the examined application claim is either anticipated by, or would have been obvious over, the reference claim(s). See, e.g., *In re Berg*, 140 F.3d 1428, 46 USPQ2d 1226 (Fed. Cir. 1998); *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) or 1.321(d) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent either is shown to be commonly owned with this application, or claims an

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invention made as a result of activities undertaken within the scope of a joint research agreement.

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

3. Claims 1 and 4-17 are rejected under the judicially created doctrine of obviousness-type double patenting as being unpatentable over claims 1-2 of U.S. Patent No. 6,695,477.

Although the conflicting claims are not identical, they are not patentably distinct from each other because the claims in the application are broader than the ones in the patent. 214

U.S.P.Q. 761 In re Van Ornum and Stanz.

4. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

5. Claims 1 and 4-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103 as being unpatentable over Yamamoto et al. (US-5,056,145, hereinafter,

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Yamamoto) in view of Yoshimura et al (US-4,764,965) and Shirai (JP 62-168,199).

Regarding claims 1 and 4-17, Yamamoto discloses a portable audio signal reproducing apparatus (as shown in Figs. 1-2 and 4-5) including a control circuit 13 (i.e., microcomputer) and signal processing circuit 15. Yamamoto also discloses the audio signal reproducing apparatus with the IC memory 10 (within an IC card 9) that is capable of storing sound data groups corresponding to musical sound or the like (col. 6, lines 33-41), and the IC card 9 (i.e., memory chip) is served as an external storage unit that is insertable into and detachable from (i.e., exchangeable or removable as claimed) the audio signal reproducing apparatus; the input unit or input section 11 including various user-activated interfaces that respectively trigger different functions by control circuit 13 for the audio apparatus is disclosed in Fig. 1, as per claim 1. An earphone 8 used for generating analog audio signals to the user is shown and would have met headphone driver unit as claimed. What does Yamamoto not teach is the portable audio signal reproducing apparatus including signal compression and decompression of the audio data using a high efficiency compression method, and left and right headphone driven unit for generating left and right audio channel audio sound.

Yoshimura discloses an apparatus that including memory storage unit (10) for storing input and output audio data having audio signal compression and decompression circuits (data compression 12, data restoration 14 is for high efficiency audio signal processing) for audio signal processing (see Fig. 1 and col. 3, lines 10-31). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to modify the portable audio signal reproducing apparatus of Yamamoto by including audio signal compression and decompression circuits for audio signal processing as shown by Yoshimura in order to efficiently and effectively managing audio data to and from the IC memory.

Yamamoto discloses an earphone 8 used for generating analog audio signals to the user is shown and discussed above. Although Yamamoto discloses the portable audio signal reproducing apparatus in the preferred embodiment that it is being used for voice or speech signal recording and playback, there is no indication of the portable audio signal reproducing apparatus that cannot be used for other purpose, such as music recording and playback. As a matter of fact, Yamamoto discloses the portable audio signal reproducing apparatus is suitable for language speaking practice, musical training or the like (col. 1, lines 9-13). It is old and well known in the art at the time the invention was made that stereophonic headphone and driven

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unit (i.e., stereo amplifier) is available for generating stereophonic sound output. And Shirai discloses a semiconductor sound recording and playback apparatus in Fig. 1 including the old and well known stereophonic driven unit (i.e., stereo amplifier) for generating stereophonic output (L & R) through stereo speaker aa to user. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art to further modify the improved portable audio signal reproducing apparatus of Yamamoto and Yoshimura as discussed above by including the old and well known stereophonic driven unit (i.e., stereo amplifier) with stereophonic headphone in order to provide user with high fidelity stereophonic output when the device is used in music training, for example.

6. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Goldberg et al is made of record here as pertinent art to the claimed invention.

Goldberg et al discloses a portable random access audio recording and playback apparatus.

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7. Applicant's amendment necessitated the new ground(s) of rejection presented in this Office action. Accordingly, **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL**. See MPEP § 706.07(a). Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the date of this final action.

8. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Xu Mei whose telephone number is 571-272-7523. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday (9:30-6:00).

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Vivian Chin can be reached on 571-272-7848. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.



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Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).



Xu Mei  
Primary Examiner  
Art Unit 2644  
02/09/2006